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Czech diplomat defects in U.S.

By Bill Outlaw
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The deputy chief of the Czechoslovakian Embassy here has been granted asylum in the United States, the Immigration and Naturalization Service said last night.

INS spokesman Duke Austin identified the official as Milan Svec. Mr. Austin said Mr. Svec was granted asylum May 14.

There had been no previous announcement or acknowledgment of Mr. Svec's defection.

Mr. Austin said he did not have further information about the defection. Information about Mr. Svec's whereabouts is not given out as a matter of policy "for obvious reasons," he said.

"The only thing I can tell you is that he did apply for asylum to the United States and it was granted," Mr. Austin said.

It could not be learned immediately whether Mr. Svec has any relatives in this country. His willingness to allow his defection to be made public suggested that he might not have close relatives in Czechoslovakia who could be subject to reprisals.

Mr. Austin said the granting of asylum would apply to Mr. Svec's relatives, but he did not have information about Mr. Svec's relatives here.

Mr. Svec is believed to have spent most of the last two months in extensive conversations with FBI agents and other U.S. officials. Mr. Svec was identified by government sources as deputy chief of the Czech mission

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and carried the rank of minister-counselor at the time of his defection.

The sources would not elaborate on why Mr. Svec defected, but they said he was willing to have his defection made public at this time.

The U.S. government granted Mr. Svec political asylum on May 14, the sources said. They declined to describe the government's reasons for granting asylum, but generally political asylum is given to citizens of countries hostile to the United States who might be persecuted for their political beliefs if they returned home.

Asked about Mr. Svec, Jaroslav Kubista, the second secretary at the Czech Embassy, said, "Milan Svec is not any longer with the embassy. He has left on May 12."

Mr. Kubista would not describe the circumstances under which Mr. Svec left, and he declined to comment further.

It could not immediately be learned how old Mr. Svec was or what posts he had held in the Czech government.

A man who identified himself as Czech Ambassador Stanislav Suja told United Press International by telephone, "I don't know of any defection. I don't have any comment on the matter."

The State Department declined comment on the defection, referring questions to the immigration agency. This, too, is routine. But Mr. Austin said he could provide no other details.